

# *News from the Wyoming Department of Health*

Wednesday, December 30, 2009

## **Citizens Urged to Test Homes for Radon** January is National Radon Action Month

The Wyoming Department of Health is reminding Wyoming residents about the dangers of radon exposure and is encouraging testing of homes to check for unsafe radon levels.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air, but can reach harmful levels when trapped indoors.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), exposure to radon can independently increase a person's risk of developing lung cancer.

It's estimated that radon is present at elevated levels in about 35 percent of Wyoming homes. Radon comes from the natural decay of uranium, which is found in the soil throughout Wyoming, the United States and around the world. The gas enters buildings from the soil through cracks and other openings in foundations.

"Because radon can't be seen or smelled, many people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that radon may be in their homes," said Timothy Ryan, environmental public health section chief with the Wyoming Department of Health.

"Any home in Wyoming may have elevated levels of radon even if nearby homes do not," Ryan said. "Testing is the only way to really know, and it's a simple and inexpensive way to help protect our homes and families."

Radon test kits can be purchased at [www.wyoming.radon.com](http://www.wyoming.radon.com) at a buy one, get one free rate of \$6.95.

If elevated radon levels are detected, radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors. "The cost is similar to that of many common home repairs such as painting or having a new water heater installed," Ryan said.

For more information about radon visit the Wyoming Department of Health Radon Program website at <http://health.wyo.gov/PHSD/radon> or visit [www.epa.gov/radon/nram](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram).

####